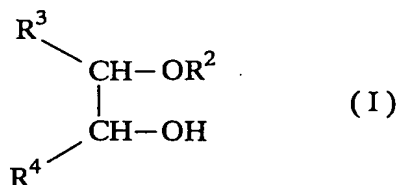


Claims:

1. A surfactant composition comprising a diol derivative (hereinafter referred to as "component (A)" represented by the formula (I) and a surfactant (hereinafter referred to as "component (B)"):

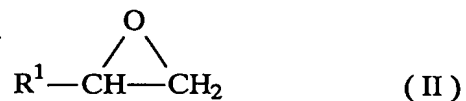


wherein one of R^3 and R^4 is a straight-chain or branched alkyl or alkenyl group having 4 to 22 carbon atoms and the other is a hydrogen atom and R^2 is a straight-chain or branched alkyl or alkenyl group having 1 to 18 carbons.

2. The surfactant composition according to Claim 1, wherein the component (A) is a diol derivative-containing composition obtained in a production method comprising a step (1) and a step (2):

step 1: a step of supplying a 1,2-epoxyalkane (hereinafter referred to as "1,2-epoxyalkane (II)") represented by the formula (II) and an alcohol (hereinafter referred to as "alcohol (III)") represented by the formula (III) in the following molar ratio: 1,2-epoxyalkane (II)/alcohol (III) = 1/1 to 1/20 to react both with each other

in the presence of an acid catalyst:



wherein R^1 represents a straight-chain or branched alkyl or alkenyl group having 4 to 22 carbon atoms;



wherein R^2 represents a straight-chain or branched alkyl or alkenyl group having 1 to 18 carbon atoms: and

step 2: a step of removing an unreacted alcohol (III) from the reaction product obtained in the step 1 to obtain a composition comprising the diol derivative represented by the formula (I).

3. The surfactant composition according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the component (B) comprises at least one anionic surfactant.

4. The surfactant composition according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the component (B) comprises at least one anionic surfactant and at least one selected from a betaine surfactant and a nonionic surfactant.

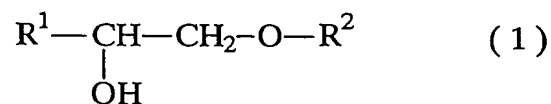
5. The surfactant composition according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, wherein the ratio by weight of the component (A) to the component (B), namely $(\text{A})/(\text{B})$, is 1/100 to 50/50.

6. A use of the surfactant composition as claimed in

any one of Claims 1 to 5 as hair detergent.

7. A use of the surfactant composition as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 5 as body detergent.

8. The surfactant composition according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the component (A) is a compound represented by the formula (1):



wherein R¹ is a straight-chain or branched alkyl or alkenyl group having 6 to 21 carbon atoms and R² is a straight-chain or branched alkyl or alkenyl group having 1 to 18 carbon atoms.

9. A use of the compound (1) described in Claim 1 or 8 to increase foam of a surfactant.

10. The surfactant composition according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the alkyl or alkenyl group of R³ and R⁴ has 6 to 12 carbon atoms and R² is an alkyl or alkenyl group having 1 to 3 carbon atoms.

11. The surfactant composition according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the content of the component (A) in the composition is 0.5 to 5% by weight.

12. The surfactant composition according to Claim 3, wherein the content of the component (A) is 3 to 30% by weight based on the anionic surfactant.

13. The surfactant composition according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the component (A) comprises a component having a higher molecular weight than the diol derivative (I) including a dimer of the 1,2-epoxyalkane (II).

14. A use of the component (A) as described in Claim 1 or 2 as body or hair detergent.